

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 290414Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO USINT BAGHDAD

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8714

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18726

E.O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PNR, PFOR, IN, IZ, TH

SUBJECT: NEW INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

REF: BAGHDAD 820

1. ROMESH BHANDARI WAS THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND FROM AUGUST 1971 UNTIL NOVEMBER 1974. HE WAS CONCURRENTLY THE INDIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. BOTH BHANDARI AND HIS WIFE, MAHARAJKUMARI KUMUDES KUMARI OF PATIALA, WERE EXTREMELY ACTIVE ON THE DIPLOMATIC AND LOCAL SOCIAL CIRCUIT IN BANGKOK. BHANDARI'S FONDNESS FOR LAVISH PARTIES AS WELL AS HIS FASHIONABLE DRESS AND ENGAGING PERSONALITY EARNED HIM THE NICKNAME OF "PLAYBOY AMBASSADOR" IN THE LOCAL PRESS. HE WAS ALSO ACTIVE WITH THE LOCAL INDIAN COMMUNITY.

2. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY SUBSTANTIVE ACTIVITY TO MATCH BHANDARI'S SOCIAL PROMINENCE. ALTHOUGH HE SERVED IN BANGKOK DURING THE PERIOD OF BUOYANT INDIAN SELF-CONFIDENCE FOLLOWING THE 1971 INDI-PAKISTANI WAR, INDIAN-THAI RELATIONS HAVE REMAINED AT A LOW LEVEL. HE TOLD A "BANGKOK POST" INTERVIEWER IN JANUARY 1972 THAT HIS COUNTRY "HELD NO GRUDGES"

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CONCERNING THE "LEAKS" TO U.S. NEWSPAPERS OF U.S. "PREJUDICE"

IN FAVOR OF PAKISTAN. WE CONCUR WITH EMBASSY DELHI'S COMMENT IN SEPTEMBER 1971 THAT BHANDARI IS PLEASANT BUT NOT DEEP.

3. BHANDARI WAS BORN IN LAHORE IN 1928 AND EDUCATED IN INDIA AND AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. HE JOINED THE INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1950 AND SERVED IN NEW YORK 1952-55 AND NEW DELHI 1955-63. HE ALSO ATTENDED NINE UNGA SESSIONS BETWEEN 1953 AND 1962, AND WAS A MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON KASHMIR THREE TIMES. HE WAS DIVISIONAL MANAGER OF THE MINERALS AND METALS TRADING CORPORATION OF INDIA 1963-65, AND DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS 1965-68. HE SERVED AS MINISTER IN MOSCOW 1969-71.

4. BHANDARI'S WIFE, A DAUGHTER OF THE LATE MAHARAJAH OF PATIALA, IS A CHARMING WOMAN WHO IS DECIDEDLY CONSCIOUS OF HER PRINCELY ORIGINS. THEY HAVE TWO SONS AND A DAUGHTER. BHANDARI'S HOBBY IS GOLF.

5. WE ARE POUCHING OUR COMPLETE FILE ON BHANDARI TO USINT BAGHDAD.
MASTERS

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